

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2698
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
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UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 0054

USOECD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EIND, ETRD, SW
SUBJECT: SWEDEN TO INTRODUCE SURVEILLANCE LICENSES FOR STEEL
IMPORTS

1. THE SWEDISH MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, ON JANUARY 4, 1978, ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO PLACE STEEL IMPORTS UNDER LICENSING REQUIREMENT EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 15. SUCH LICENSES WILL BE WHAT THE GOVERNMENT CALLS "SURVEILLANCE" LICENSES, WHICH WILL BE ISSUED WITHOUT DELAY AS SOON AS IMPORTERS HAVE FURNISHED THE GOVERNMENT WITH INFORMATION ON THE SIZE OF THE STEEL IMPORT SHIPMENT, ITS ORIGIN, AND THE PRICE PAID FOR IT. THE SWEDISH BOARD OF TRADE, A GOVERNMENT AGENCY DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, WILL ISSUE THE NECESSARY IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

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2. ACCORDING TO COMMERCE MINISTER BURENSTAM LINDER, THE NEED FOR INTRODUCING SUCH A LICENSING REQUIREMENT MUST BE VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE GENERAL UNREST NOW PREVAILING IN THE INTERNATIONAL STEEL SECTOR. MINISTER BURENSTAM LINDER EXPLAINED THAT THE AIM OF THE LICENSING REQUIREMENT IS NOT TO HINDER STEEL IMPORTS INTO SWEDEN

BUT TO GIVE THE GOVERNMENT A BETTER POSSIBILITY OF KEEPING AN EYE ON THE VOLUME OF STEEL BEING IMPORTED INTO THE COUNTRY, THE ORIGIN OF SUCH IMPORTS, AND THE PRICES AT WHICH THEY ARE BEING OFFERED. THE SWEDISH COMMERCE MINISTER CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS LATEST MOVE MUST ALSO BE SEEN AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE MEASURES RECENTLY TAKEN IN THE STEEL SECTOR BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

3. THE COMMERCE MINISTER STATED HE IS NOT FOR THE TIME BEING PLANNING TO TAKE ANY FURTHER MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO STEEL IMPORTS. HE EMPHASIZED, AS HE HAS OFTEN DONE IN THE PAST, THAT SWEDEN IS A SMALL NATION LARGELY DEPENDENT UPON ITS EXPORT TRADE. SWEDEN, THEREFORE, WOULD BE FAR BETTER OFF IF IT DID NOT GIVE WAY TO THE PROTECTIONIST PRESSURES TO WHICH IT IS BEING SUBJECTED. MINISTER BURENSTAM LINDER, ON THE OTHER HAND, STRESSED THAT IN THE EVENT HE SHOULD FIND THAT PRICES CHARGED FOR STEEL IMPORTED INTO SWEDEN SHOULD DEVELOP IN WHAT HE TERMED AN ABNORMAL MANNER, THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT HESITATE TO CONSIDER WHAT ADDITIONAL MEASURES MIGHT BE TAKEN IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW SITUATION. THE COMPETITIVE CONDITIONS PREVAILING IN THE SWEDISH STEEL MARKET MUST NOT BE ANY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE PREVAILING IN THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET.

KENNEDY-MINOTT
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